

appreciation I feel for the high honor you have paid me here this evening. I accept this Menorah, this symbol of our creation, with both elation and humility. I am elated because in a career that spans seven decades I have never received recognition which I prize more highly than this Simcha Award of Menorah Lodge of B'nai B'rith. I am humble because in so many ways I feel unworthy of such a high tribute. But I thank you nevertheless, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart for your kindness and your thoughtfulness, and I shall cherish with pride this badge of honor throughout the remainder of my life.

Anyone would be proud to be singled out for a recognition by an organization such as B'nai B'rith, with its history of some 120 years of selfless service to the betterment of mankind. I know of no other service organization with a higher record of achievement. I have had the good fortune of knowing intimately many members of your organization, and all of them I hold in the very highest respect and esteem.

The inscription which you have placed on the award which I have received here this evening very generously refers to my "long and distinguished public service." It has been a long one, certainly, stretching back over nearly forty years. I can only hope that history will be kind enough to me to record it as being also distinguished. However that may be, it has been for me a pleasant and rewarding service, and I thank my Creator for this, one of the richest of all human blessings — the opportunity to serve my fellow man.

Some months ago, the author of a history of my home town asked me to write a brief political autobiography, and its preparation prompted me to indulge in reminiscences of the early days of my political activities. Like many others, I suspect, my entry into the arena of politics came almost by accident. It was the author of the book I mentioned, Dr. C. E. Collins, a life-long friend, advisor and confidant, who first stirred my interest in the political affairs of my home city, Crisfield, and Somerset County. It was at his suggestion that I took the post of clerk in my Crisfield polling place. That was in 1926. Four years later, in 1930, a group of my friends in Somerset County approached me with the suggestion that I could help the Democratic ticket in the election of that year by becoming a candidate for clerk of court. I acceded to their request, entered the primary and won and in the general election won over my Republican opponent by a narrow margin. This was the beginning of a career in the public service that has continued until today.